

Based on Many Passages

Vows to God are Very Important!

Sunday, Sept. 18 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, Sept. 19 at 7 PM
 18th Sunday after Pentecost / 17th Sunday after Trinity – 2016

Introduction: Dear friends in Jesus Christ: Since we have all sinned, God took radical action to save us! Then, *during our confirmation instruction*, we studied about ♦**who** we are in Christ and ♦**what** it means to be a follower of the Christ. Then, **when we were confirmed, we vowed to** ➔ believe the Bible, ➔ confess what we believe, ➔ faithfully hear the Word and receive the Supper, ➔ live according to the Word of God, and ➔ even die, *rather than stop doing all of those things!*

OUR FAITHFULNESS to our vows is for OUR BENEFIT! Every aspect of what we vowed is important, *but the only part the church can measure is attendance.* There have been **37 weeks this year**, plus other special services. **These are the numbers for our 172 confirmed members who could attend:**

- **46 people** attended **34 or more times**; 90% ($34 = 92\%$).
- **11 people** attended **30-33 times**; 80% ($30 = 81\%$).
- **18 people** attended **26-29 times**; 70% ($26 = 70\%$).
- **8 people** attended **23-25 times**; 60% ($23 = 62\%$).
- **89 people** attended **0-22 times**, which is less than 60%.

Attendance cannot save us, so why have we vowed to faithfully receive Word and Sacrament? Because the Spirit works through those means to bless us now and forever!

In this sermon we will briefly consider ♦ what it means to be a disciple, ♦ the importance of keeping our vows, and ♦ the importance of confessing Christ in our lives.

1. **What Is a Disciple?** ^{NAS} **Matthew 28:18** And Jesus came up and spoke to them [*His eleven disciples*], saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...” // So Jesus received the authority; then He sent *His disciples* to *make disciples*. Jesus told them HOW to make disciples with these words:
 - a. “...baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,” // In other words, *as you apply water in the name of the Triune God, God the Father* will send **the Spirit** to work through the Word to unite people to **Me**, the Savior!
 - b. ²⁰ “teaching them to observe all that I commanded you...” // So it’s TEACHING *for the purpose of* OBEYING! In other words, baptized believers **LEARN** and **LIVE** God’s Word!

2. **Are Vows Important?** Consider these passages:
 - a. Breaking a vow to God is very serious:
 - i. ^{ESV} **Numbers 30:2** If a man vows a vow to the LORD [*as we all did when we were confirmed*]... he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.
 - ii. ^{NAS} **Ecclesiastes 5:4-5** When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it, for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

iii. ^{ESV} **Malachi 1:14** Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished...

b. Encouragement to keep our vows: ^{ESV} **Psalm 50:14-15** ...perform your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.

c. Keeping our vows is a form of thanksgiving:
^{ESV} **Psalm 116:12-14** What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

3. **Is Confessing Necessary?** Yes!

a. What we confess: ^{NAS} **Matthew 10:27** “What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear *whispered in your ear*, proclaim upon the housetops.” // As the Lord speaks to us *by the Spirit through the Word*, so we are called to **share that truth!**

b. When we rightly trust in God, we will not fear people: ²⁸ **“And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”** // Think about God; He is almighty in power, *but His love for us is so great!* Therefore, let us gladly 😊love Him, 😊trust Him, and 😊obey Him!

c. God knows and controls everything, so we need not fear: ²⁹ **“Are not two sparrows sold for a**

cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

³¹ Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many sparrows." // God is awesome; we are valuable to Him, so *let us live without fear!*

- d. Disciples confess Jesus: ³² **“Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.”** // Since Jesus was not ashamed to †put on flesh, †take our sins, and †endure our punishment, we confess Him in word and deed! As the Spirit united us to Jesus, so *the Spirit empowers us to confess Jesus!*
- e. Unbelievers deny Jesus: ³³ **“But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.”** // Jesus is in the middle; *when we know Him, we know the Father.* But when we deny Him by ➡**not** keeping our vows and ➡**not** living in agreement with God’s Word, we deny ☹️the Savior and ☹️the One who sent His Son to be our Savior.

Conclusion: Let us pray: Father in heaven, we have been baptized into Christ, and have had countless opportunities to keep our vows, *thus to learn and live Your Word.* Wherever we have fallen short, *please forgive us;* and wherever we need to change, *please change us,* so that **You** are glorified and **we** are blessed! In Jesus’ name we pray...

CONNECT WITH US ➡ Website: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com

Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230